

SRS releases spending cut list

One-page document outlines plan for \$43 million budget reduction

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TOPEKA — The Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services on Friday released an outline of its plan for cutting more than \$43 million from its budget.

Almost half the cuts – \$19.3 million – are tied to not-yet-defined reforms to the state's Medicaid program.

The plan also calls for eliminating almost \$3.8 million in state-funded grants and contracts, though it's unclear which ones.

The list of spending reductions, followed by their state and all-fund savings:

- Eliminate SGF for dues and subscriptions for SRS and state hospitals; \$68,809; \$110,347.
- Delay computer purchases; \$426,790; \$879,945.
- Delay server replacement; \$150,000; \$312,827.
- Salary reductions; \$710,201; \$1,573,862.
- Other operating reduction; \$462,729; \$1,017,074.
- SRS office closures; \$400,000; \$416,800.
- Eliminate selected contracts; \$3,478,732; \$3,981,952.
- Three percent cut to remaining contracts except leases; \$418,099; \$878,588.
- Three percent cut to contracted janitorial services; \$9,143; \$20,812.
- Claim federal funds on Medicaid contracts for disability and behavioral health services; \$304,788; \$304,788.
- Medicaid reform savings; \$8,433,274; \$19,341,681.
- Savings from contractual arrangements affecting in-home services from the disabled (Financial Management System); \$2,378,359; \$5,588,250.

- Savings from electronic timekeeping for attendant care workers; \$2,196,023; \$5,159,829
- Eliminate selected grants; \$325,000; \$325,000.
- Three percent cut to remaining grants, excluding foster care, family preservation, Early Head Start and mental health; \$1,527,584; \$2,092,650.

The reductions in state spending total \$21,289,531; for all funds the total reduction is \$41,679,405.

The plan also includes a projected \$1.5 million increase in state gaming revenues, and calls for raising an additional \$16,400 by charging non-SRS groups for use of the conference rooms at the SRS Learning Center in Topeka.

Earlier this year, lawmakers agreed to cut about \$21.5 million from the state-funded portion of the SRS budget and more than \$43 million from all funds, including federal matching dollars.

The cuts are to take effect in fiscal 2012, which began July 1, 2011.

“We’re not living in the same economy we were living in four years ago,” said Angela de Rocha, a spokeswoman for SRS. “We are trying to deal with that as responsibly as we can and still provide services to the people that it is our responsibility to serve.”

De Rocha said the salary reduction had been accomplished by consolidating some positions within the agency.

The electronic timekeeping for attendant care workers, she said, should be up and running by Nov. 1.

Earlier this week, members of the House-Senate Home and Community-Based Services Oversight Committee asked SRS for a copy of the plan.

“We know we’re making a lot of cuts,” Rep. Bob Bethell, R-Alden, said Friday. “But it’s becoming my impression that they’re not being made in a systematic way. I wanted to know what the plan was.”

After receiving the one-page plan from SRS, Bethell said he had more questions than answers. “I don’t see how they come up with \$710,000 in salary cuts when everything I’ve heard and seen shows they’re spending more on central-office salaries than they were before. The other thing is that it looks to me like the big money is going to be coming out of services for the people in Kansas who happen to be less fortunate. I’m not sure that’s good for the State of Kansas.”

Sen. Laura Kelly, D-Topeka, said she was disappointed in the plan.

“We need more information,” she said. “There’s not much here.”

In an email to KHI News Service, de Rocha noted that plans call for closing the SRS offices in Lyndon, Garnett, Wellington and Pratt on Sept. 2. Other office closings:

- Sept. 9 – Coffeyville
- Sept. 16 – Marysville and McPherson
- Sept. 23 – Fort Scott.